

Statement of Representative Ed Royce
Chairman
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade
The State Department's Counterterrorism Office: Budget, Reorganization, Policies
April 14, 2011

This hearing of the Subcommittee will come to order.

Today we are pleased to have with us Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, the State Department's top counterterrorism official. This is an opportunity to review his Office's budget, especially important given our dire fiscal straits.

As part of a State Department reorganization, the Administration would elevate the Ambassador's *Office* of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism to *bureau* status. Certainly the counterterrorism portfolio is vital. Nevertheless, a certain skepticism is warranted in *any* Washington reorganization. What would the elevation have the Office do better? Or worse? Would the change portend a staffing and budget increase? Should an existing bureau be downgraded as an off-set? The Administration requires congressional authorization for this, so we look to the Ambassador for answers.

The State Department's request for counterterrorism activities is roughly \$260 million. Its programs fund many small projects. For example, the Administration is requesting \$800,000 in Antiterrorism Assistance for Malaysia. The Obama Administration stresses that counterterrorism must be "strategic," attacking the political, social, economic and other ills abroad that it believes drive militant recruitment. But it's fair to ask whether these relatively small efforts can make a dent against these daunting challenges? And how do we measure their effectiveness?

There are policy issues too.

The Bush Administration ill-advisedly removed North Korea from the state sponsors of terrorism list as part of fruitless nuclear negotiations. Since its delisting, North Korea has proliferated to state sponsors of terrorism. And I have concerns about Sudan's likely *delisting*. We need to make *sure* its hands are clean. Subcommittee Member Poe has introduced legislation urging the Secretary of State to remove the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran from the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list we'll be looking at. This Iranian exile group lives in a precarious security situation, being harassed and assaulted by Iraqi troops.

The Obama Administration entered office committed to addressing terrorism differently. This was exemplified by its efforts to shutter Guantanamo Bay and bring 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to New York for *civilian* trial. After *bipartisan* congressional action to prevent GITMO detainees from being brought to U.S. soil, most agree that GITMO will *not* be closed anytime soon. And in a major reversal, Attorney General Eric Holder announced that KSM would *not* be prosecuted in civilian courts, but by a military commission at Guantanamo Bay. Good.

The Administration stressed that its predecessor's foreign policies drove anti-American militancy. But a 2009 USAID report notes, "We need to recognize that many [violent extremists] are moved primarily by an unshakable belief in the superiority of certain values; by a perceived obligation to carry out God's command; or by an abiding commitment to destroy a system they view as evil and/or oppressive. In other words, variables located in the realm of identity, faith and spirituality matter a great deal." Extremism is about much more than U.S. foreign policy.

Finally, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano recently claimed that security along our southern border is "better now than it ever has been." Frankly, that's laughable given its rampant violence. One of my constituent was just kidnapped in Mexico, yet the State Department yesterday rescinded a travel warning that U.S. citizens could be targeted by drug cartels in three Mexican states. I wonder.

And there's growing concern over illegal southern border crossings by individuals from Somalia, Pakistan, Yemen and other countries home to active terrorist organizations. We'd better start treating border security as national security.

I'll now turn to the Ranking Member for his comments.